

Speaking of Research

Series 2 - Ramon Almeida

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

LGBTQ violence, Brazil, homophobia, transphobia, hate crimes, public policies, qualitative approach, participant observation, access to justice, intersectional approach, institutional revitalization, judicial system, colonial issues, global challenge, hate crime data.

SPEAKERS

Catherine McDonald, Ramon Almeida

Catherine McDonald 00:04

Hello and welcome to Speaking of Research a podcast from the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership. I'm Catherine McDonald, and in the second series of our podcast, we're focusing on research that addresses global challenges. We'll be in conversation with doctoral researchers about their research, which global challenges they hope to inform, and how they hope their work will make a difference. In this episode, I'm joined by Ramon Almeida from the University of Brighton. Ramon, your research looks at violence against the LGBTQ community in Brazil. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Ramon Almeida 00:44

Hi, Catherine. First of all, it's a pleasure to be here. So, I used to be a lawyer in Brazil, I've been living the UK since 2019. When I worked with the LGBTQ community in Brazil, I always faced, you know some judge that they couldn't deal with these cases very well. And in 2019, back to 2019 the Brazilian Supreme Court overruled to make acts of homophobia and transphobia illegal in Brazil. So, since 2019 any LGBTQ person who faces, you know, any act of violence now is protected by this legislation. And what I try to understand is actually what happened after 2019. So, we have a social issue, Brazil is one of the most dangerous countries for an LGBTQ person to live in the world. For example, in 2024 Brazil recorded 291 violent deaths against its LGBTQ people. In 2013 Brazil was ranked as one of the most dangerous countries for trans people and travesties to live around the world. So, I try to understand what happened after 2019. Is the criminalization helping to tackle violence against the Brazilian LGBTQ community, or not? How the LGBTQ community in Brazil, they've been accessing courts, how are the judges, you know, dealing with these cases after 2019. So, I try to understand and to to answer the question, how actually, we can transform public policies to tackle hate crimes against the Brazilian marginalised LGBTQ community.

Catherine McDonald 02:43

And what have you discovered so far?

Ramon Almeida 02:46

To help me to answer that question, I have employed a qualitative approach. So, I conducted six months of participant observation in two NGOs in Brazil. I went to Salvador, which, by the way, it's a very, very beautiful city in Brazil. It's a must see, it's on the northeast of Brazil. Salvador is the former capital of Brazil. We say in Brazil that Salvador is the heart of Brazil. I stayed there for six months, and I did interview 33 participants, and 27 of them, they were victims of hate crimes, and the other participants, they were, judge, police officers and policy makers. What I can say about initial you know, I'm still working with this data, I'm still writing up my chapters about my main findings, but for now, we can say that the access to justice isn't equal within the LGBTQ communities. We need an intersectional approach on it, because one thing is you being a white gay man from middle class in Brazil, another thing is you being a trans black woman living in vulnerable situation, for example, working as sex workers. I found as well, institutional revitalisation, especially when it does relate to trans people. Most of my participants, they shared with me that when they go after being victim of hate crime, when they go to policy stations, they also face, they've been facing or no more hate crimes there. So the police asked them, are you sure that that happened? You are here just to make me waste my time. You know what? You don't serve any rights, I don't even see you as a woman, for me, you are just a gay man and etc. The judge that I interviewed also, they showed me, you know, a lack of technical and social preparation for cases involving gender and sexuality. And most important is that the LGBTQ community facing violence, they've been finding more support within networks, so NGOs, they've been working them more than state institutions.

Catherine McDonald 05:04

It's clear from everything you're saying, there's so many layers to this. You mentioned earlier in our conversation that you were a lawyer for many years in Brazil, working with the LGBTQ community. Was there a particular moment in time where you identified the need for this research, or in a particular experience that either you had or someone that you were working with had, where you just thought, enough is enough?

Ramon Almeida 05:30

That's a great question, actually, and thank you for these. You know, that's the first time that someone is asking me about this. And yeah, I remember one of the last case that I work at as a lawyer, the judge told me, I'm not going to be calling your clients by her name. And the judge kept saying that the previous name, you know, my client was a trans woman, and the judge said, no, I'm not going to be calling her by her name because I don't want to, because they don't believe on this, and there is nothing that you can do. And when I left the court, I feel the report against that judge, and nothing happened at all. So in Brazil, we do have few

researches about the judiciary. We don't actually, the judiciary system in Brazil, we don't talk much about them. And our judge in Brazil, they are still embedded with colonial issues, and mainly, most of them, they are white, straight, and they came from a middle-class social background. So I wanted to leave you know my positionality as acting as a lawyer to research about how the judiciary they actually they've been performing.

Catherine McDonald 06:48

Your motivation for the research is, is so clear. So you say, your obviously focusing on Brazil. What's the global challenge here that you're particularly looking to inform or change?

Ramon Almeida 07:00

Of course, because I'm Brazilian, I think that I wanted to do this research about Brazil. But the global challenge it's that violence does relate to all of us. So although Brazil is one of the worst country for an LGBTQ person to live in the world, LGBTQ people around the world, they are still facing hate crimes here in the UK, in the USA, in South Asia. You know, there are places that we don't have actually official data, places like Russia and Middle East, we don't have official data reporting actually how the LGBTQ people, they've been living there. When it does relate to violence, and when does relate to violence against LGBTQ people, although we live in different places and there is this geographic, you know, limitations between us, it does matter to all of us to understand how to tackle this hate crime, because that could help to inform, for example, here in the UK, what we shouldn't at least be doing to the LGBTQ community as well.

Catherine McDonald 08:06

It's a very powerful note to end on. Thank you so much to Ramon Almeida for joining us today, and thanks to you for listening to this episode of Speaking of Research from the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership. To find out more, please visit southcoastdp.ac.uk. Don't forget to subscribe wherever you get your podcasts to access earlier and forthcoming episodes. This was a Research Podcast production.